

Department of Planning and Building
County of San Luis Obispo

GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2011-12



OUR MISSION:

PROMOTING THE WISE USE OF LAND

HELPING TO BUILD GREAT COMMUNITIES

Reviewed by the County Board of Supervisors
October 9, 2012

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

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Introduction

This report reviews the activities that took place to implement the County General Plan between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. The General Plan is the blueprint for the future physical, economic and social development of the unincorporated areas of the county, outside cities. It implements California laws that regulate land use planning and development. This report fulfills a state requirement to measure progress in implementing the General Plan. The scope of the report includes:

- Status of the General Plan documents,
- Major planning activities that were begun, worked on or completed,
- Changes to plans and ordinances to implement plan policies,
- Residential development in relation to Housing Element goals, and
- Number of public hearings held for development and amendment applications.

The County of San Luis Obispo is a local government that serves over 100,000 people within the unincorporated area (outside incorporated cities). It is required by the State of California to protect resources, plan an orderly distribution of land uses and apply fair and equitable regulations for new development.

The Department of Planning and Building serves the public in several roles: as visionary, statistician, designer, regulator and protector of public health, safety and welfare, to name a few. Within all of its roles, the Department's major responsibility is to serve the public with cost-effective and courteous service, and to represent the public's interest by creating fair and equitable policies and recommendations. These ethical commitments are the foundation of the recommendations and decisions of the Planning and Building Department. The Department serves the following key stakeholders:

- The **Board of Supervisors** has the major role of deciding the direction and implementation of the General Plan, through its decisions on proposed plan amendments, applications, and priorities and funding.
- The **clients** are applicants and the public who receive immediate and direct services from the Department.
- The **general public**, as the "end-user" of the general plan, has the important role of shaping the purpose, meaning and effect of the General Plan through participation in drafting, reviewing and commenting on plans, ordinances and permits.
- The **employees** of County departments and non-County agencies have varying roles implementing the General Plan.

The County General Plan

The General Plan is both the vision and blueprint for how the County as a community wants to develop and grow while protecting valued resources. **The General Plan provides policies for planning land uses and for allowing new development and land divisions.** It also is the vision for protecting special places such as the landmark Morros; essential uses such as agriculture; and resources such as air, water, and plant and animal habitats. The General Plan includes the documents, called elements, shown in Table 1, which also includes brief information about their status and whether they are required or optional.

State law requires that each city and county adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning."

Table 1, General Plan Elements

Element	Required or Optional	Date of Adoption or Last Major Revision	Comment
Land Use* Framework for Planning*	Required	<u>2009</u>	Framework for Planning guides planning for the 15 Area Plans. A reorganization and consolidation of the Land Use and Circulation Elements is in progress.
Area Plans:	Required		
Adelaida	Required	1980	
El Pomar-Estrella	Required	2003	
Estero	Required	2009	Los Osos community plan update in progress
Huasna-Lopez	Required	1986	
Las Pilitas	Required	1980	
Los Padres	Required	1980	
Nacimiento	Required	1980	
North Coast	Required	2008	
Salinas River	Required	1996	San Miguel community plan update in progress
San Luis Bay	Required	1980	
San Luis Bay Coastal	Required	1990	
San Luis Obispo	Required	1994	
Shandon-Carrizo	Required	2012	
South County	Required	1994	
South County Coastal	Required	1990	
Local Coastal Plan - Coastal Plan Policies	Required	2004	
Circulation	Required	2009	
Housing*	Required	2010	
Conservation and Open Space	Required	2010	
Noise	Required	1992	
Safety*	Required	1999	
Agriculture	Optional	1998	
Master Water & Sewer Plan	Optional	1972	
Offshore Energy*	Optional	2010	
Economic	Optional	1999	Update in progress
Parks and Recreation	Optional	2006	
Notes: * = Received outstanding plan award from American Planning Association; Underline = Change in status			

Major Planning Activities

Top Priority Activities

On March 29, 2011, the Board of Supervisors set 10 General Plan, ordinance and related programs as the highest priority to implement during this fiscal year. The following three items were completed:

1. Implement permit streamlining measures and incentives for projects in alignment with Board priorities and in collaboration with a Streamlining Committee

Status: Complete. The results and an accompanying implementation plan were completed and presented to the Board of Supervisors in June 2011. Implementation of all recommendations was completed at the end of 2011.

2. Adopt and begin implementation of the EnergyWise (Climate Action) Plan

Status: Complete. The plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on November 22, 2011.

The EnergyWise Plan, known originally as the Climate Action Plan, is not part of the County General Plan, but was prepared in response to policies and a program in the County General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element. The Plan demonstrates the County's continued commitment to address the challenges of climate change by reducing local GHG emissions, with an emphasis on improving the energy efficiency of buildings and transportation, and by adapting to a changing climate.

3. Update the Shandon Community Plan

Status: Complete. The plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 3, 2011.

A comprehensive community plan for Shandon provides for a range of housing choices, new businesses, services, job and economic development opportunities, an enhanced downtown commercial area, and infrastructure financing.

In February of 2012, the Board of Supervisors set 10 General Plan and related programs as the highest priority to implement during this fiscal year, in addition to other already authorized activities. These highest-priority programs and their status are listed below:

1. Economic Strategic Plan in collaboration with the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC)

Status: In Progress. The EVC completed the strategy and it became available to the public in November 2010. Staff continues to collaborate with the EVC. The Board of Supervisors authorized a companion update to the County's Economic Element of the General Plan in September 2011.

The countywide economic strategy was prepared through a collaboration of public, nonprofit and private stakeholders, with the nonprofit Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) acting as lead agency.

2. Update of the Economic Element

Status: In Progress. The Draft Economic Element update was released April 30, 2012. The Planning Commission reviewed the document on August 23, 2012 and recommended approval to the Board of Supervisors. The update is scheduled for review by the Board of Supervisors in October 2012.

3. Planned Development Ordinance

Status: In Progress. Draft amendments were released in March 2011 and are under review. An ad hoc committee made up of architectural professionals has been meeting with staff to review proposed language. A public hearing draft is expected in fall or winter 2012.

4. General plan and ordinance amendments to modify the agricultural cluster policies and provisions

Status: In Progress. Draft amendments and the Final Environmental Impact Report have been released. On August 30, 2012, the Planning Commission recommended approval of amendments to the Board of Supervisors.

5. Land Use and Circulation Elements consolidation and reorganization

Status: In Progress. The Land Use and Circulation Elements--primarily the area plans and community plans--are being reorganized and consolidated to streamline them and make them more user-friendly. A public review draft is expected in November 2012.

6. Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan and Fish and Wildlife agency review

Status: In Progress. A contract was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 5th, 2012 for a consultant to prepare the Administrative Draft habitat conservation plan for submittal to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November 2012.

7. Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Resource Capacity Study (RCS) implementation

Status: In Progress. The Board of Supervisors approved the RCS and its recommended actions in February 2011 and subsequently directed staff to proceed with ordinance amendments to implement the RCS recommendations. Following extensive public outreach and review by the Water Resources Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendments on July 27, 2012. A Board of Supervisors hearing is scheduled for September 25, 2012.

8. Special Events ordinance amendments

Status: In Progress. In July 2011, the Planning Commission recommended approval to the Board of Supervisors of ordinance amendments relative to special events. In November 2011, the Board directed staff to forward the amendments to the Uniquely SLO - Economic Cluster Group, which is expected to continue its review until early 2013.

9. Infill Subdivision Standards

Status: In Progress. A consultant is assisting staff with an Infill Subdivision Standards study identifying changes to ordinance standards and plans that would promote infill development and remove regulatory obstacles to achieving strategic growth. A background report was released in May 2012. Public workshops are planned for October 2012.

10. Complete Communities Survey

Status: In Progress. A consultant is assisting staff to evaluate infrastructure and public facilities needs to accommodate strategic growth in the communities of San Miguel, Templeton, Oceano, and Nipomo. The background report was released in March 2012. The facilities inventory was released in August 2012. Public workshops are planned for October 2012.

Other Major Planning Activities

San Miguel Community Plan Update

This is a comprehensive community-based plan update that will help shape new growth and development, enhance the quality of life, and bring vitality to San Miguel. The plan will emphasize the themes of infrastructure, economic vitality and a healthy community.

The Cal Poly City and Regional Planning Department conducted successful community outreach and prepared an administrative draft plan. Technical background reports are being prepared by consultants. Staff is preparing a public review draft plan that is expected to be released in November 2012. Public hearings are expected to begin in late 2013.

Oceano Revitalization Plan

This plan is being prepared by the Local Government Commission with a grant from Caltrans. The plan is intended to make Oceano a safer and more inviting place to walk, bike, shop and gather, with enhancements to increase economic opportunities. The plan will focus on the downtown area along Front Street and the neighborhood area surrounding Oceano Elementary School. The plan is under preparation, and a public review draft plan is expected in October 2012.

General Plan Amendments

Changes or amendments to the General Plan occur through applications by the public or by County government after authorization to proceed by the Board of Supervisors. State law requires the General Plan to be kept current. Updates should occur periodically. The following amendments were approved in FY 2011-12:

Table 2
General Plan Amendments Completed - Fiscal Year 2011-12

Amendment	Description
LRP2011-0006 County of SLO	Amend the Framework For Planning – Inland and Coastal Zone (Part I of the Land Use Element of the County General Plan) to require preparation of the Resource Management System (RMS) Annual Summary Report every two years, or as otherwise directed by the Board of Supervisors, instead of every year, as is currently required. Approved 11/22/2011.
LRP2010-00020 County of SLO	Amend the Public Facilities Financing Plan and the Public Facilities Fees Ordinance, Title 18 of the County Code to offer the option of deferring the payment of Public Facilities Fees to final building inspection. Approved 7/26/2011.

Resource Management System Revisions

These are amendments to the Resource Management System (RMS) in Framework for Planning, Part I of the Land Use Element, to deal with resource deficiencies and limitations effectively and in a timely manner. The amendments include recalculating lead times for responding to resource Levels of Severity. A public review draft of the amendments is expected in spring 2013.

Implementing the General Plan

The General Plan is implemented in several ways, including development of private and public property and adoption and amendment of land use ordinances. In addition, the County or other agencies implement General Plan programs and strategies to, for example, develop needed public facilities, add services and commit public resources to building and maintaining streets, facilities and buildings.

Ordinance Amendments

Ordinances implement the General Plan. For example, the *Land Use Ordinance* regulates land use and development and the *Growth Management Ordinance* manages the rate of growth in housing. Decisions to approve or deny permits or land divisions are based on these and other ordinances.

The Land Use Ordinance (LUO) is the official zoning ordinance for the County; it implements General Plan policies with zoning standards. In Fiscal Year 2011-12, the following Land Use Ordinance and other amendments were approved:

Table 3
Ordinance Amendments Approved - Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Amendment	Description
LRP2010-0008 County of SLO	Amend Section 21.02.090 of the Real Property Division Ordinance (Title 21 of the San Luis Obispo County Code) so any application for a project that may generate substantial public controversy or involve significant land use policy issues and for which review authority is granted to the Subdivision Review Board pursuant to the provisions of Titles 21, 22, and / or 23, may be referred to the Planning Commission for review and decision. The amendment would also modify the time limits for a tentative map consistent with state law. Approved 4/17/2012.
LRP2009-00005 County of SLO	Amend Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.08.165, Residential Vacation Rentals, regarding definition, location, tenancy, noise, notice, existing residential vacation rentals, Transient Occupancy Tax, violations and complaints. Approved 4/17/2012.

Strategic Growth Implementing Strategies

A package of amendments to plans and ordinances that will carry out essential strategic growth implementation strategies was authorized by the Board in November 2009. The following projects have been funded through a grant from California Strategic Growth Council to help carry out strategic growth strategies:

1. Infill Subdivision Standards

See item 9 in a preceding section, Top Priority Activities.

2. Complete Communities Survey

See item 10 in a preceding section, Top Priority Activities.

3. Community Design Model

This model will calculate the effects of different land use scenarios on land use, population, employment, transportation, resources, and other indicators. The model is near completion and will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on October 9, 2012.

4. Illustrative Design Model

This model is completed. It illustrates with photo-simulations and a video “virtual tour” how high quality infill development and community expansion can be compatible with and fit in with the character of existing neighborhoods.

5. Land Use Economics Study

This study was completed and presented to the Board of Supervisors on July 17, 2012. It determined the land use, real estate and economic effects of possible limitations on rural area growth.

6. San Miguel Technical Studies

The following studies will be essential in updating the San Miguel Community Plan and preparing its Environmental Impact Report: a) an economic strategy, b) a public facilities financing plan, c) a transportation study, and d) a water study. These studies are currently underway.

Other Implementation Programs

The General Plan is static unless its vision, goals and concepts are implemented in policies or projects on the ground. In addition to the Los Osos plumbing retrofit program highlighted below, each element (document) of the General Plan contains programs to complete. Also, each area plan within the Land Use Element (LUE) includes programs to fulfill needs for local services, transportation, resources and land use. Most of those programs have been prioritized by the Board of Supervisors with community input.

Los Osos Plumbing Retrofit Program

In 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted two ordinances to address water issues in the community of Los Osos:

- **Title 8 – Retrofit of Plumbing Fixtures Upon Sale:** The amendment requires toilets, showerheads and aerators to be retrofitted when a property sells.

During Fiscal Year 2011-2012, the Department received 146 retrofit forms. 61 dwellings needed to be retrofitted, representing a savings of approximately 2.5 acre-feet per year.

- **Title 19 – Water Conservation Provisions:** This amendment requires new development to retrofit enough structures to save twice the amount of water to be used by the new development.

During Fiscal Year 2011-2012, the Department issued six water conservation certificates for new development, but those did not result in any issued building permits. These certificates represent a potential net reduction in water demand of roughly 3 acre-feet per year.

Economic Element Programs

The following key actions were taken by the County in the past year to implement programs of the Economic Element:

Program 1.h.2: Maintain and improve, as appropriate, a county-wide system for delivery of economic development services.

- The County provided funding from its general fund to the nonprofit Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) for implementation of business retention, attraction and expansion services. The County has provided such funding for seventeen years.

- The County provided funding through its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to the EVC, and Mission Community Services Corporation for a variety of services to small businesses. These services enabled small businesses to prepare business plans, develop manageable accounting and payroll systems and learn about international trade.

Program 4.d.6: Coordinate infrastructure policies for the County and region.

- An interdepartmental team from the Administrative Office, the General Services Agency, Public Works and the Planning and Building Department began work on a Comprehensive Capital Improvement Program. Initial tasks included assembling information about needed infrastructure improvements from County agencies, cities and community service districts

Housing Element Implementation Activities

On August 25, 2009, the Board of Supervisors adopted the 2009 Housing Element, which covers the five-year period from 2009 to 2014. Over the last year, the County completed the following:

- Approved of the Shandon Community Plan, which designated more land for a variety of housing types (April, 2012).
- Spent \$4,512.97 of in-lieu fees to help pay permit fees for 11 affordable housing units in Nipomo in 2011. Additionally, the Board of Supervisors allocated \$39,155 of in-lieu and housing impact fees to assist paying for costs related to construction of six units in Oceano, 29 units in Templeton, and 80 units in San Luis Obispo.
- Allocated over \$1.4 million in 2011 HOME grant funds for construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units, including a 36-unit apartment project on Courtland Street in Arroyo Grande, a property acquisition in San Luis Obispo, construction of three homes in San Luis Obispo, redevelopment of the Oak Park Apartments in Paso Robles, and rehabilitation of transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.
- Allocated \$17,194 of 2011 CDBG funds to rehabilitate homes and an additional \$17,194 to provide solar systems to low and moderate income households.
- Facilitated affordable housing through advocacy, education and support by Planning Department staff being actively involved with community groups such as the Workforce Housing Coalition, the Housing Trust Fund Commission, and the Homeless Services Oversight Council (Ongoing, 2011).
- Rehabilitated seven housing units for lower income households using grant funds (2011).
- Established a three-year eviction prevention program through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) Grant. This grant served 230 persons in year two (2009-2012).

The Housing Element and Affordable Housing Development

The primary purpose of the Housing Element of the County General Plan is to facilitate the provision of needed housing. The secondary purpose is to meet the requirements of State law and achieve certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), which in turn helps the County qualify for certain funding programs offered by the State.

The Housing Element in effect during this annual report review period was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in August 2009, certified by the State in January 2010, and will be in effect through 2014. It documented that sufficient vacant land was designated in the County General Plan to accommodate housing needed by county residents of all income groups, as established in the Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP). Unfortunately, the production of new housing affordable to county residents proceeded at a pace that fell below the quantified objectives established in the Housing Element, as listed in Table 4.

Table 4
Housing Objectives Compared to Units Built, 2009-2014 (Calendar Years)
(NOTE: Table 4 reflects the *calendar year* Housing Element Reporting period. Additionally, in 2011, HCD started asking for building permits issued rather than units completed)

		Very Low and Low Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income	Total
1	Housing objectives 2009-2014 (Housing Element, pg 4-2)	858	418	924	2,200
2	Housing units completed in 2009	18	6	402	426
3	Housing units completed in 2010	72	4	290	394
4	Housing units completed in 2011	32	2	133	167
5	Remaining unmet need to be met 2012-2014	736	406	99	1,213

Affordable Housing Projects Completed, FY 2011-2012

A total of 40 affordable units were completed in the 2010-2011 fiscal year in the unincorporated county. These units include: 29 units in Templeton by People's Self Help Housing Corporation (Terebinth Lane Homes), six new secondary dwelling units countywide, four farm support quarters countywide, and one mixed use unit.

Residential Development Trends, FY 2011-2012

The pace of residential development is expected to remain slow for another year or more. This reduced construction activity reflects a slow pace of home buying, increased inventory of unsold homes, tightening of mortgage credit, and a decreasing inventory of land where housing can be built. The trend in multi-family residential development (in all price ranges) has remained very low compared to detached single-family housing, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Trend in Residential Development, 2006 – 2010 FY

FINALED BUILDING PERMITS	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Single-family	772	512	362	347	200
Multi-family	99	80	14	26	22
Total new units	871	592	378	373	222
Multi-family percentage of total new units	11.3%	13.5%	3.7%	7.0%	10.0%

Commercial Development Trends, FY 2011-2012

All new non-residential development is categorized here as “commercial,” including public projects, rural and urban industries, sales and services businesses and offices. The total valuation of commercial development provides an indication of the value and changes through the last five years, as shown in Table 6:

Table 6
Trend in Commercial Development, FY
2007 – 2012

COMMERCIAL/PUBLIC PROJECTS	Issued Permit Valuations (\$)	Percent (%) Change	Final Building Permits	Percent Change
FY 2007-08	34,891,841		106	
2008-09	30,529,292	-12%	107	1%
2009-10	20,264,410	-34%	99	-7%
2010-11	24,241,457	20%	96	-3%
2011-12	27,258,960	12%	57	-41%

Application Hearings

Table 7 lists the number of public hearings held on applications for development and policy decisions. A single application may involve several hearings that are included in the table.

Table 7
Application Hearings

Hearing Body and Type of Application	FY 2011-12	FY 2010-11	% Increase (Decrease)
Board of Supervisors — Total	117	129	(09%)
General Plan/Ordinance Amendments	21	12	75%
Agricultural Preserves	5	11	(54%)
Appeals	20	16	25%
Other Items	28	32	(12%)
Consent Items	43	58	26%
Planning Commission — Total	78	105	(26%)
Conditional Use Permit/Dev Plans	27	33	(18%)
Minor Use Permits	3	6	(50%)
Variances	5	4	25%
Tract Maps	4	2	100%
General Plan/Ordinance Amendments	16	25	(36%)
Appeal	9	4	125%
Consent Items (time ext, GP conformity reports, AG Preserves)	14	31	(55%)

Hearing Body and Type of Application	FY 2011-12	FY 2010-11	% Increase (Decrease)
Subdivision Review Board — Total	25	20	25%
Parcel Maps	10	14	(28%)
Lot Line Adjustments—Coastal	4	1	300%
Conditional Certificates	7	0	700%
Consent Items (time ext, public lots)	4	5	(20%)
Planning Department Hearings — Total	73	102	(28%)
Minor Use Permits:			
Residential Single Family	7	15	(53%)
Residential Additions	19	16	18%
Residential Multi Family	2	0	200%
Commercial/Industrial/Office	4	4	0%
Miscellaneous	25	44	(43%)
Road Names	3	3	0%
Lot Line Adjustments—Inland	11	18	(39%)
Appeal of Admin Fine	2	2	0%
Airport Land Use Commission — Total	3	3	0%
Project Reviews	3	3	0%
TOTAL ALL PROJECTS	295	369	(20%)